



File Code: 1950

Date: January 31, 2011

Dear Interested Party:

You are invited to review the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the North End Sheep Allotment. The allotment is located in Union, Umatilla, and Wallowa Counties, Oregon. The attached vicinity map shows the project location on Walla Walla Ranger District.

Five alternatives, including a no grazing alternative, were analyzed in the DEIS. Alternative 1 is the proposed action which authorizes 4 bands of sheep. Alternative 2 limits grazing to the south of Lookingglass Creek and authorizes 3 bands of sheep. Alternative 3 retracts the allotment further, but adds an additional grazing area to the southwest, and authorizes 3 bands of sheep. Alternative 4 is the same as Alternative 3 except the new grazing area is not included, and authorizes 2 bands of sheep. Alternative 5 is the no grazing alternative.

A more detailed description of alternatives and analysis of environmental effects can be found on Umatilla National Forest's website at www.fs.fed.us/r6/uma/projects/readroom/. A copy of the DEIS (CD) is enclosed with this letter if you commented during the scoping period or previously requested a copy of the DEIS. For anyone else wanting a copy (CD or paper) of the DEIS, please contact Holly Harris at 509-522-6290 or email her at hharris@fs.fed.us.

Public comments will be accepted for 45 days following the date of publication of the notice of availability (NOA) in the Federal Register that is expected to occur on February 11, 2011. The publication date of the NOA in the Federal Register is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period for a draft EIS. Those wishing to comment should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. Timing for the request for comments is in accordance with 36 CFR 215.5. Those who provide comments during this comment period are eligible to appeal the decision pursuant to 36 CFR part 215 regulations.

It is important that reviewers provide their comments at such times and in such a manner that they are useful to the agency's preparation of the final environmental impact statement. Therefore, comments should be provided prior to the close of the comment period and should clearly articulate the reviewer's concerns and comments. The submission of timely and specific comments can affect a reviewer's ability to participate in subsequent administrative appeal or judicial review. Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment will be part of the public record for this proposed action. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, anonymous comments will not provide the respondent with standing to participate in subsequent administrative appeal or judicial review.

How to Comment and Timeframe

Written, facsimile, hand-delivered, oral, and electronic comments concerning this action will be accepted until March 28, 2011. Written comments should be submitted to: Michael Rassbach, District Ranger, 1415 West Rose Street, Walla Walla, WA 99362. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are: 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Comments can be faxed to 509-522-6000. If you choose to contact us by phone the number is 509-522-6290.



Electronic comments should be submitted as part of the actual e-mail message or as an attachment in Microsoft Word, rich text format, or portable document format only and sent to:
comments-pacificnorthwest-umatilla-wallawalla@fs.fed.us

In cases where no identifiable name is attached to a comment, a verification of identity will be required for appeal eligibility. If using an electronic message, a scanned signature is one way to provide verification. E-mails submitted to e-mail addresses other than the one listed above, in other formats than those listed, or containing viruses will be rejected. It is the responsibility of all individuals and organizations to ensure their comments are received in a timely manner, before the end of the comment period. For electronically mailed comments, the sender should normally receive an automated electronic acknowledgement from the agency as confirmation of receipt. If the sender does not receive an automated acknowledgement of the receipt of the comments, it is the sender's responsibility to ensure timely receipt by other means. Individuals and organizations wishing to be eligible to appeal must meet the information requirements of 36 CFR 215.6.

The decision document for this project will be mailed to those individuals who submit comments during the 45-day comment period, and to others who request it. If you need more information please contact Holly Harris, Project Leader, at the Walla Walla District office (509) 522-6290 or email hharris@fs.fed.us.

I appreciate the interest you have shown in this project and request your continued assistance in strengthening the management of resources in this area.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL L. RASSBACH
District Ranger

Attachment – Vicinity Map

Figure 1. North End Allotment Vicinity Map

